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EXAMINER

PASS, NATALIE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3626

DATE MAILED: 10/07/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/739,448

Applicant(s)

JOHNSON ET AL.

Examiner

Natalie A. Pass

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 June 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11, 13 and 20-49 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11, 13 and 20-49 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Notice to Applicant

1. This communication is in response to the amendment filed 15 June 2005. Claims 1-11, 13, have been amended. Claims 12, 14-19 have been cancelled. Claims 20-49 have been newly added. Claims 1-11, 13, 20-49 are currently pending.

Specification

2. The amendment filed 15 June 2005 is objected to under 35 U.S.C. 132 because it introduces new matter into the disclosure. 35 U.S.C. 132 states that no amendment shall introduce new matter into the disclosure of the invention. "New matter" constitutes any material which meets the following criteria:

a) It is added to the disclosure (either the specification, the claims, or the drawings) after the filing date of the application, and

b) It contains new information which is neither included nor implied in the original version of the disclosure. This includes the addition of physical properties, new uses, etc. The added material which is not supported by the original disclosure is as follows:

- "...based upon the plan requirements data..." as disclosed in claim 1, lines 11-12 and in claim 30, lines 14-15.

In particular, Applicant does not point to, nor was the Examiner able to find, any support for this newly added language within the specification as originally filed on 20 December 2000. As such, Applicant is respectfully requested to clarify the above issues and to specifically point out support for the newly added limitations in the originally filed specification and claims.

Applicant is required to cancel the new matter in the reply to this Office Action.

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3. If Applicant continues to prosecute the application, revision of the specification and claims to present the application in proper form is required. While an application can, be amended to make it clearly understandable, no subject matter can be added that was not disclosed in the application as originally filed on 20 December 2000.

Claim Objections

4. The objections to claims 11 and 13 under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim still stands for substantially the same reasons given in the previous Office Action (paper number 12012004). Further reasons appear below.

(A) Claim 11 has been amended to include the recitation of "program product" and "by the computer system" and "when executed cause a processor of the computer system to perform" the method recited in claim 1.

(B) Claim 13 has been amended to include the recitation of "the computer data signal having encoded therein" and "that performs" the method recited in claim 1.

However these amendments fail to correct the objection under 37 CFR 1.75(c), since the claims still fail to further limit the subject matter of claim 1. These claims still do not pass the "Infringement Test" for dependent claims. See MPEP § 608.01 (n). Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form.

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5. The objections to claims 12 and 14 under 37 CFR 1.75(c) are hereby withdrawn due to the amendment filed 15 June 2005.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. Claims 1-11, 13, 20-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

(A) Independent claims 1 and 30 recite limitations that are new matter, as discussed above, and are therefore rejected.

(B) Claims 2-11, 13, 20-29, 31-49 incorporate the features of independent claims 1 and 30, through dependency and are also rejected.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §101

7. The rejections of claims 1-10, 13-14 under 35 U.S.C. 101 are hereby withdrawn due to the amendment filed 15 June 2005.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are

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such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 1-5, 11, 13, 20-27, 30-32, 37-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lockwood, U.S. Patent Number 4, 567, 359 for substantially the same reasons given in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004), and further in view of Warady, U.S. Patent Number 6, 067, 522. Further reasons appear hereinbelow.

(A) Claim 1 has been amended to include the recitation of

- “the database having stored therein insurance plan products,” in lines 5-6;
- “to the customer on a display device of the computer system,” in lines 7-8;
- “and user selected plan options obtained from an input device of the computer system,” in lines 9-10;
- “the description of insurance plan options including an indication that a plan may be offered but is not currently available to the customer based upon the plan requirements data and either other selected plan options or the customer data,” in lines 10-13;
- “in the computer system based upon a selection made from the presented insurance plan options that includes a description of an insurance plan,” in lines 16-17.

As per these new limitations Lockwood teaches a method for generating a customized proposal (Lockwood; column 6, lines 3-11) further comprising

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the “memory” (reads on “database”) having stored therein “information on insurance policies and prices for various insurance companies” (reads on “insurance plan products”) (Lockwood; column 5, lines 37-40);

presenting a description of insurance plan options to the customer on a “terminal” (reads on “display device of the computer system”) (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 5-11) based upon the stored customer data and user selected plan options obtained from an input device of the computer system (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 12-16); and

generating a customized proposal in the computer system based upon a selection made from the presented insurance plan options that includes a description of an insurance plan (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 17-32).

Lockwood fails to explicitly disclose

the description of insurance plan options including an indication that a plan may be offered but is not currently available to the customer based upon the plan requirements data and either other selected plan options or the customer data.

However, the above features are well-known in the art, as evidenced by Warady.

In particular, Warady teaches

the description of insurance plan options including an indication that a plan may be offered but is not currently available to the customer based upon the plan requirements data and either other selected plan options or the customer data (Warady; Figure 7e, column 4, line 51 to column 5, line 5, column 5, line 65 to column 6, line 5).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Lockwood to include the description of insurance plan

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options including an indication that a plan may be offered but is not currently available to the customer based upon the plan requirements data and either other selected plan options or the customer data, as taught by Warady, with the motivations of enabling enrollment forms that are customized for each employee on an individual basis, providing a system that manages health and welfare benefit enrollment information, that can communicate the information to interested parties such as, for example, participating employees and plan providers, and produce the billings needed for each plan provider's premiums and/or fees, and reduce time wasted and human error by employers and employees implementing and administering health and welfare benefit plans (Warady, column 1, lines 44-45, 57-61, column 2, lines 35-45).

(B) Claim 5 has been amended to include the recitation of

- wherein the “generating step comprises deriving the estimated costs from information sorted in the database.”

As per this limitation, Lockwood and Warady teach a method as analyzed and discussed in claim 1 above

wherein the generating step comprises deriving the estimated costs from information sorted in the database (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 17-32).

(C) Claim 11 has been amended to include the recitation of

- “program product readable by the computer system” in lines 1-2; and
- “that when executed cause a processor of the computer system to perform,” in lines 2-3.

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As per these limitations, Lockwood and Warady teach a method as analyzed and discussed in claim 1 above further comprising

program product readable by the computer system (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 17-32); and

that when executed cause a processor of the computer system to perform (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 17-32).

(D) The amendments to claims 2-4, 13 appear to have been made merely to correct minor typographical or grammatical errors and to change dependencies, and to correct objections under 37 CFR 1.75(c). While these changes render the language of the claims smoother and more consistent, they otherwise affect neither the scope and breadth of the claims as originally presented nor the manner in which the claims were interpreted by the Examiner when applying prior art within the previous Office Action.

As such, the recited claimed features are rejected for the same reasons given in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004, section 5, pages 6-7), and incorporated herein.

(E) As per newly added claims 20-23, Lockwood and Warady teach a method as analyzed and discussed in claim 1 above

wherein the generating step comprises providing an insurance plan as part of the customized proposal (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 17-32);

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wherein the generating step comprises gathering “predetermined customer information” (reads on providing insurance application forms”) as part of the customized proposal (Lockwood; column 3, lines 15-16);

wherein the generating step comprises providing “a series of quotations from various institutions... purchaser can compare quotations” (reads on “benefit charts data”) as part of the customized proposal. (Lockwood; column 3, lines 32-33); and

wherein the generating step comprises providing provider information data as part of the customized proposal (Lockwood; column 7, lines 5-12).

(F) As per newly added claims 24-27, Lockwood and Warady teach a method as analyzed and discussed in claim 1 above

wherein the available insurance plan options comprise a plurality of dental insurance plans (Warady; column 4, lines 1-19);

wherein the available insurance plan options comprise a plurality of life insurance plans (Warady; column 4, lines 1-19);

wherein the available insurance plan options comprise a plurality of disability insurance plans (Warady; column 4, lines 1-19);

wherein the insurance plan comprises a set of insurance plans (Warady; column 4, lines 1-19).

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Warady are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

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(G) Newly added claim 30 differs from method claim 1, in that it is a system rather than a method for generating a customized proposal in the development of insurance plans for a customer.

System claims 30-32, 37-38, 33-36, 43-45, 47 repeat the subject matter of claims 1-5, 20-23, 24-26, 27 respectively, as a set of elements rather than a series of steps. As the underlying processes of claims 1-5, 20-23, 24-26, 27 have been shown to be fully disclosed or obvious by the collective teachings of Lockwood and Warady in the above rejection of claims 1-5, 20-23, 24-26, 27, it is readily apparent that the system disclosed collectively by Lockwood and Warady includes the apparatus to perform these functions. As such, these limitations are rejected for the same reasons given above for method claims 1-5, 20-23, 24-26, 27, and incorporated herein.

10. Claims 6-10, 28-29, 39-42, 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lockwood, U.S. Patent Number 4, 567, 359 and Warady, U.S. Patent Number 6, 067, 522, as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Gamble, et al., U.S. Patent Number 6, 163, 770.

(A) Claim 6 has been amended to include the recitation of

- wherein the presenting “step comprises determining if an offered plan is available to the customer based upon the user selected plan options or the customer data.”

As per this limitation, Lockwood, Warady and Gamble teach a method as analyzed and discussed in the previous Office Action (paper number 12012004) and in claim 1 above

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wherein the presenting step comprises determining if an offered plan is available to the customer based upon the user selected plan options or the customer data (Lockwood; column 3, lines 9-48, column 6, lines 17-32), (Warady; column 4, line 51 to column 5, line 5, column 5, line 65 to column 6, line 5).

The remainder of claim 6 is rejected for the same reasons given in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004, section 7, pages 8-9), and incorporated herein.

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Warady are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Gamble are as given in the rejection of claim 6 in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004), and incorporated herein.

(B) Claim 7 has been amended to include the recitation of

- “wherein the indication that a plan may be offered but is not currently available to the customer comprises conditions which are not met for the customer to qualify for the offered but currently not available insurance plan.”

As per this limitation, Lockwood, Warady and Gamble teach a method as analyzed and discussed in the previous Office Action (paper number 12012004) and in claim 1 above

wherein the indication that a plan may be offered but is not currently available to the customer comprises conditions which are not met for the customer to qualify for the offered but currently not available insurance plan (Warady; Figure 7e, column 4, line 51 to column 5, line 5, column 5, line 65 to column 6, line 5).

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The remainder of claim 7 is rejected for the same reasons given in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004, section 7, pages 9-10), and incorporated herein.

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Warady are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Gamble are as given in the rejection of claim 6 in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004), and incorporated herein.

(C) Claim 8 has been amended to include the recitation of

- “with the input device,” in line 4;
- “presented to the customer on the display device,” in lines 5-6;
- “in the sales computer system,” in line 9-10.

As per these limitations, Lockwood, Warady and Gamble teach a method as analyzed and discussed in the previous Office Action (paper number 12012004) and in claim 1 above comprising

selecting, with the input device (Lockwood; column 6, lines 3-4);

options presented to the customer on the display device (Lockwood; column 6, lines 7-11); and

in the sales computer system (Lockwood; column 3, lines 32-39, column 6, lines 23-32).

The remainder of claim 8 is rejected for the same reasons given in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004, section 7, pages 9-10), and incorporated herein.

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The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Warady are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Gamble are as given in the rejection of claim 6 in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004), and incorporated herein.

(D) The amendments to claims 9-10 appear to have been made merely to correct minor typographical or grammatical errors and to change dependencies. While these changes render the language of the claims smoother and more consistent, they otherwise affect neither the scope and breadth of the claims as originally presented nor the manner in which the claims were interpreted by the Examiner when applying prior art within the previous Office Action. As such, the recited claimed features are rejected for the same reasons given in the prior Office Action (paper number 12012004, section 7, page 10), and incorporated herein.

(E) As per newly added claim 28, Lockwood and Warady teach a method as analyzed and discussed in claim 1 above comprising

wherein the storing step comprising storing the customer data and insurance plan products in a "memory" (reads on "database") that is hosted in a networked environment (Lockwood; column 2, lines 34-46) with portions stored in a remote memory storage device (Lockwood; column 2, lines 51-54).

Lockwood and Warady fail to explicitly disclose a relational database.

However, the above features are well-known in the art, as evidenced by Gamble.

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In particular, Gamble teaches wherein the storing step comprising storing the customer data and insurance plan products in a relational database (Gamble; column 14, lines 34-52).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the method of Lockwood to include this limitation, as taught by Gamble, with the motivations of generating documentation for insurance policies and of efficiently calculating changes in a claims costs and generating printed insurance documentation (Gamble, column 5, line 58 to column 6, line 46).

(F) As per newly added claim 29, Lockwood, Warady and Gamble teach a method as analyzed and discussed above comprising

wherein the storing step comprising storing the customer data and insurance plan products in a relational database (Gamble; column 14, lines 34-52) comprising a plurality of modules (Warady; Figure 1, column 8, lines 20-35).

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Gamble are as given in the rejection of claim 28 above, and incorporated herein.

The motivations for combining the respective teachings of Lockwood and Warady are as given in the rejection of claim 1 above, and incorporated herein.

(G) Newly added claims 39-42, 46, 48-49 differ from method claims 6-10, 28-29 in that they recite a system rather than a method for generating a customized proposal in the development of insurance plans for a customer.

Newly added system claims 39-42, 46, 48-49 repeat the subject matter of claims 6-10, 28-29 respectively, as a set of elements rather than a series of steps. As the underlying processes of claims 6-10, 28-29 have been shown to be fully disclosed or obvious by the collective teachings of Lockwood, Warady and Gamble in the above rejection of claims 6-10, 28-29, it is readily apparent that the system disclosed collectively by Lockwood, Warady and Gamble includes the apparatus to perform these functions. As such, these limitations are rejected for the same reasons given above for method claims 6-10, 28-29, and incorporated herein.

Response to Arguments

11. Applicant's arguments filed 15 June 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments will be addressed hereinbelow in the order in which they appear in the response filed 15 June 2005.

(A) At page 11 of the 15 June 2005 response, Applicant asserts that none of the amended claims or newly added claims contains new matter. Examiner respectfully notes an opposing view, as noted in the "new matter" rejection applied to some of the amended and newly added claim language. Specifically, Examiner was unable to find support for this newly added language within the specification as originally filed on 20 December 2000. Accordingly, Applicant is respectfully requested to clarify the above issues and to specifically point out support for the newly added limitations, as described above, in the originally filed specification and claims.

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(B) At page 11, last paragraph of the 15 June 2005 response, Applicant notes that a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement has been submitted along with the 15 June 2005 response, however Examiner has not seen evidence of this document, and requests Applicant to clarify this issue or resubmit this document.

(C) At page 12, second paragraph of the 15 June 2005 response, Applicant argues the objections to claims 11 and 13 under 37 CFR 1.75(c) for being of improper dependent form and requests Examiner to clarify the objection. In response, Examiner notes that MPEP states that “[a]ny claim which is in dependent form but which is so worded that it, in fact is not, as, for example, it does not include every limitation of the claim on which it depends, will be required to be canceled as not being a proper dependent claim...”. See MPEP § 608.01 (n). MPEP also states that “[t]he test for a proper dependent claim is whether the dependent claim includes every limitation of the parent claim. The test is not whether the claims differ in scope. A proper dependent claim shall not conceivably be infringed by anything which would not also infringe the basic claim...” and “if claim 1 recites a method of making a specified product, a claim to the product set forth in claim 1 would not be a proper dependent claim if the product might be made in other ways” (emphasis added). In the case of recited dependent claim 11, an owner of the claimed “computer program product” could infringe claim 11 and not infringe claim 1. In the case of recited dependent claim 13, an owner of the claimed “computer data signal” could infringe claim 13 and not infringe claim 1.

(D) Regarding Applicant's discussion of the rejections of claims 1-10, 13-14 under 35 U.S.C. 101, at page 12, third paragraph of the 15 June 2005 response, these rejections have been withdrawn due to the amendments to these claims, filed 15 June 2005.

(E) At page 13, second paragraph of the 15 June 2005 response, Applicant apparently argues that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

In response, the Examiner respectfully submits that obviousness is determined on the basis of the evidence as a whole and the relative persuasiveness of the arguments. See *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *In re Hedges*, 783 F.2d 1038, 1039, 228 USPQ 685,686 (Fed. Cir. 1992); *In re Piasecki*, 745 F.2d 1468, 1472, 223 USPQ 785,788 (Fed. Cir. 1984); and *In re Rinehart*, 531 F.2d 1048, 1052, 189 USPQ 143,147 (CCPA 1976). Using this standard, the Examiner respectfully submits that the burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of obviousness has at least been satisfied, since evidence of corresponding claim elements in the prior art has been presented and since Examiner has expressly articulated the combinations and the motivations for combinations that fairly suggest Applicant's claimed invention (see paper number 12012004). Note, for example, the motivations explicitly stated at the paragraph bridging pages 8-9 of the previous Office Action (i.e., "... with the motivations of generating documentation for a first insurance policy ... (Gamble, column 5, line 58 to column 6, line 46). In addition, it is noted that in the previous Office Action, each and every claimed limitation was carefully analyzed and addressed in a detailed manner encompassing six different sections over eleven pages of text (see paper number 12012004, sections 4-9, pages 5-15).

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(F) Applicant's arguments on pages 13-14 of the response filed 15 June 2005 with respect to newly amended claims 1-11, 13, and newly added claims 20-49 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

12. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

13. **Any response to this final action should be mailed to:**

Box AF

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington D.C. 20231

or faxed to: (571) 273-8300.

For formal communications, please mark

"EXPEDITED PROCEDURE".

For informal or draft communications, please

label "PROPOSED" or "DRAFT" on the front page of

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the communication and do NOT sign the
communication.

After Final communications should be labeled "Box AF."

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Natalie A. Pass whose telephone number is (571) 272-6774. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 6:30 PM. The examiner can also be reached on alternate Fridays.

15. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas, can be reached at (571) 272-6776. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-3600. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

16. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Natalie A. Pass

October 3, 2005



JOSEPH THOMAS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3500